

Sent in March 2003

To prospective Scientific Advisory Board members:

I am writing to invite you to become a member of the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) for the Grand Challenges in Global Health (GCGH) initiative funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The Foundation has asked me to chair the SAB, and I am writing to you in that capacity. Your stature in the field of global health and your knowledge of the scientific needs of the global health enterprise would be a great asset to the Scientific Advisory Board, so I hope you will accept this invitation.

The GCGH initiative was established by the Gates Foundation in partnership with the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to address critical scientific challenges in global health and increase research on diseases that cause millions of deaths in the developing world. The initiative is taking a novel approach to solving problems of global health. At the outset, a number of critical scientific questions in global health, the "Grand Challenges", will be identified after soliciting suggestions from the scientific and public health communities. Grants will then be awarded, after thorough review, to investigators who submit proposals for research to address these challenges. The Grand Challenges will be scientific problems that are currently road blocks to progress, but that, if solved, could make a dramatic difference in control of major health problems in the developing world. Emphasis will be on disease areas that have been relatively neglected by the research community but that have a high prevalence in the third world.

The SAB will provide overall advice and direction to the initiative, including identifying the Grand Challenges and making the final funding decisions about grants. Management and staffing will be provided by the Foundation for the National Institutes of Health, a private organization that works in partnership with the NIH. The budget for the program is currently \$200 million over ten years, but may increase if the program attracts sufficient exciting applications. I am committing my time to this endeavor because I believe it can make a real difference in an area of critical importance to the world and because it promises to be scientifically exciting and challenging. I hope you will agree to participate and invest your time and creativity to make this program a success.

Your duties as a Board member will include participation on occasional conference calls and one or two face to face meetings each year. The activity is likely to be more intense in the first year or two of operation, because we will be formulating strategies and selecting a significant number of awardees. During your term of service, you will be asked to review and comment on various materials relating to choosing the Grand Challenges, to help set overall policy for the program, and to vote on the selection of grants to be funded. It will be critical to the success of the program for Board members to commit themselves to spending the necessary time and to attending the key meetings and conference calls.

The Board will have 18 to 20 members when complete. The following is the roster to date:

Harold Varmus, Chair, President, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center
Rick Klausner, Executive Director, Global Health Program, Bill and Melinda
Gates Foundation
Elias Zerhouni, Director, National Institutes of Health
Julie Gerberding, Director, Centers for Disease Control
Anthony Fauci, Director, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases
Roy Anderson, Head, Department of Infectious Diseases, University of London

Nirmal Ganguly, Director General, Indian Council for Medical Research
Francis Nkrumah, Director, Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research,
U. of Ghana

Additional individuals who are being invited include:

Gerry Keusch, Director, Fogarty International Center, NIH
Peter Singer, Director, University of Toronto Joint Centre for Bioethics
Yongyuth Yuthavong, President, Thai Academy of Science and Technology, Thailand
Julio Frenk, Minister of Health, Mexico
Gustav Nossal, former Head, Walter and Eliza Hall Institute, Melbourne, Australia
Fotis Kafatos, Director, European Molecular Biology Laboratory
Odille Pujilon, Pasteur Institute, France

We expect to make a few further appointments but are still evaluating candidates. Any suggestions you wish to make would be welcome.

I hope you will be able to join us to bring this innovative, exciting and extremely important program to realization.

Best regards,

Harold Varmus